

inhalation among first time smokers, especially young ones.

B&W says 45% of Kool smokers are African American and 8% Hispanic, and the Fusions range will be targeted at hip, trend setting smokers, more heavily skewed to the Hispanic population, in bars and nightclub venues, with print ads appearing in publications such as *Playboy* and *Vanity Fair*. A B&W executive called Mr Cremers, appropriately (see below), was quoted as saying that the response from consumers was that "This is a pack to be seen with". That sums up much of what underlies health officials' objections, and conversely, is no doubt why RJ Reynolds, which is in line for acquisition by B&W soon, has been trying similar brand extensions. The latest range, Camel Exotic Blends, has Crema, apparently tasting like cream; Izmir Stinger, like a cocktail of brandy and crème de menthe; Dark Mint, chocolate and mint; and Mandarin Mint and Twist, both citrus flavoured. It had already launched Camel Turkish Jade in 2001, with Mandarin Mint, Creamy Mellow Mint, Light and regular Mellow Menthol blends.

In Brazil, BAT has been even bolder with a new extension of its Carlton brand. Souza Cruz, its local subsidiary, has launched Carlton Crema and Carlton Mint, both with flavours, striking new packaging, and a printed insert. The insert seems designed to flatter smokers who would like to be considered sophisticated, with notes on the origins of the world "mint", for example, and the history of vanilla for Crema. They make ample use of words such as "refreshing", "perfume", "sweet", and "smooth". Each insert ends with the slogan, "Carlton, a rare pleasure". The packs also have a semi-clear plastic cover on the outside: on Carlton Mint, it is green with a mint leaf, while Crema's is cream coloured with a coffee and cream image print. These wrappings also carry the government health warning images—not necessarily the same as the photograph on the actual pack, but frequently one with less impact. For example, in one case, the image on the pack reflected a person being resuscitated from a heart attack, but that on the plastic wrap showed a couple with problems caused by the smoking man's bad breath, an image the government has decided to replace because evaluation has shown it to be ineffective.

Public health authorities in Brazil, the region's leader in tobacco control, view the inserts as advertisements circumventing Brazil's legislation, which only permits printed tobacco ads in the internal area of points of sale. It is to be hoped that if they are right, a case is

taken to court. Its outcome might help seal off one way tobacco companies may think they can get round laws that in due course should be spawned worldwide by the FCTC.

Malaysia: racing round the hurdles

Anyone who visited Malaysia in the 1980s and who turned on the television set in their hotel room was likely to see more tobacco promotion than they had ever seen before in a half hour of channel hopping. If they were there on public health business, they had an additional shock when they learned that the country had banned tobacco advertising on television. Ministry of health officials would announce this with sincerity, though some of them would admit that there were problems of circumvention. Did these stem from cross border television, which can be so troublesome to a tobacco control leader with less enlightened neighbours? No, the ads were on Malaysian TV, but were not for cigarettes at all, but for those well known but impossible to obtain products such as Marlboro and Kent holidays, or Camel clothing. In those days, no tobacco control advocate's conference presentation was complete without slides or video clips showing how tobacco companies were exploiting Malaysia and its innocent government.



Saturation tobacco promotion was very much in evidence at the recent Formula One motor race in Malaysia.

But all that was a long time ago, and now Malaysia has a strictly enforced advertising ban, and frequent, strong anti-tobacco rhetoric from government ministers. So when Formula One negotiated the introduction of this new spectator sport in Malaysia, with the construction of a brand new racetrack in Kuala Lumpur, it was bound to be interesting to see how the health ministry would fare against the tobacco industry. Could it prevail in preventing this most tobacco saturated, adrenaline loaded burst of show business from undermining its laudable efforts to educate people about the realities of



USA: Life or Death playing Cards in California, USA produces health promotion playing cards containing health messages targeted at young people. Each of the cards features a different cartoon character alongside a reason not to smoke, or take drugs—Life Playing Cards and Death Cigarette Playing Cards deal with smoking, and Drugs Playing Cards with drug use. The cards are available to view or purchase from their website (www.deathcards.com), or for a free sample pack contact Life or Death Playing Cards, PO Box 3134, San Luis Obispo, CA 93403, USA; tel +1 805 545 9625; fax +1 805 542 0860.

smoking, and to protect them from grossly misleading images about cigarettes? From the outside, at least, it seems that the ministry tried. It was reported to have sought assurances that there would be no brand promotion, and eventually to have received them. The trouble was, with that old innocence in danger of turning into gullibility, it believed the assurances. When the big event, Malaysia's first on the Formula One circuit, actually took place, it was nothing less than a three day orgy of pro-tobacco hype: not a shred of tobacco promotion had been sacrificed. For the tobacco companies, it must have been a triumphant justification of the decision of Formula One, which they effectively control, to pull out of some of those stuffy old countries that had clamped their efforts to push cigarette promotion to the ultimate boundaries of possibility.

Mere words will not convey what eye witnesses experienced. An atmosphere of excitement, festivity, and celebration was generated by banners, flags, huge video screens, music and disco events, a plethora of kiosks, all with staff decked out in their brand's colours, some of them students hired just for a day, or a night—some of the events, such as the Dunhill party on the Saturday night, went on into the small hours of the next day. At the "Regenerate Red Zone", Marlboro's extravaganza held the same night, Marlboro girls were everywhere, in knee high red leather boots, red miniskirts, and white Marlboro tank tops. At every event, the dominant cigarette brand had its vehicles, lots of them—from sports utility vehicles and

trucks, to plinth mounted, spot lit racing cars, and even three Dunhill cars to be given away, pre-painted in the brand's colours, to the lucky winners of a prize draw. Entry to the draw was the same as to the party: a form had to be completed that captured personal information for BAT's future direct marketing.

A similar price was paid by those entering the Marlboro zone. Entry was supposed to be restricted to the usual 18 years and over—no doubt the restriction of branding to within the events would be the companies' and the government's defence—but witnesses were unanimous in pointing out that ages were never seen to be checked. In any case, the promotion was so over the top that any such nuance seemed utterly irrelevant. In addition to the large scale attractions mentioned above, the events were awash with attractive handouts promoting the brands—free coasters, ashtrays, banners, promotional mobile phone downloads, and competitions offering the opportunity to win branded prizes such as computer games, to name but a few; and there was smoking, everywhere. Almost everyone in the events was young, and almost all were smoking.

Dunhill, Marlboro, West, Lucky Strike, and Mild Seven—half the Formula One teams are sponsored by tobacco and they were all there, and all at it, big time. Tobacco companies do not knowingly throw money away, so the importance to them of this sort of unrestrained promotion can be judged from what a BAT official told one visitor to the Dunhill party. The one night event had cost the company around

US\$1 million, he said, and it had taken over the entire Park Inn International hotel for the weekend. But this is small money in the scheme of Big Tobacco's Formula One spending: Marlboro's Ferrari team is estimated to get around US\$150 million a year, and the others up to another US\$200 million between them.

As for the race itself on the Sunday, most notable was an entire stand, Hill Stand G, which the organisers had filled with students—to get more young people interested, involved, and able to experience firsthand this new sport. Although they probably forgot to mention it to the government, they will also have wanted them to experience the lightning fast cigarette packs on wheels driven by young heroes who are the modern day cowboys of tobacco promotion—tough, fearless, macho, independent, glamorous—you name it, as long as it is positive and seductive, and as far as you can get from lung cancer, emphysema, and heart disease.

So now we know how tobacco companies and Formula One see life beyond the European Union ban that looms in a couple of years. How it squares with what ought to be implemented under the FCTC is unclear; but as the event had to be approved by the health ministry, and since there was supposed to be no direct branding present at the event, it seems that what took place did not constitute direct advertising and branding under Malaysian law. If this is the size of coach and horses that can be driven through one of the more sophisticated Asian country's legislation, it does not bode well for the future.